

THE GIFT OF SUFFERING

1 Thessalonians 3:1-5

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November 8, 2020

The questions below are designed to be used by Saylorville Church Cell Groups as they meet during the week following the Sunday morning message at Saylorville. The intent is not for groups to answer every question, but for leaders to use the questions as a guide as they tailor the discussion to the unique needs of their group. The Sunday message and these questions can be found each week at www.saylorvillechurch.com/sermons.

CONNECT WITH YOUR GROUP (10-15 MINUTES)

- *Christmas is next month! What are some of the most memorable gifts you've received over the years?*
- *Do you think it's natural for humans to think about suffering as a gift? Why or why not?*

APPLY THE BIBLE (45-60 MINUTES)

- **Remember** what you talked about last time you met. Anything you need to follow up on as a group?
- **Review** the notes you took on Sunday. What is **one thing** that sticks out to you about what you heard?
- **Read** 1 Thessalonians 3:1-5. In his message, Pastor Jason shared **two truths about trials that will change your perspective**.

Truths About Trials:

1. We are sometimes forsaken...for the sake of others (vs. 1-2)

- Paul sacrificed by sending Timothy to the Thessalonians and leaving himself alone in Athens
 - *Think back to people who have helped you be more like Jesus. What are some of the sacrifices they made to pour into your life? Have you thanked them?*
 - *Pastor Jason told a story about his attitude about his son's trampoline. Are there areas in your life right now in which you "just need to die to yourself" for the sake of someone else?*
- In 2 Corinthians 1:6-7, we're told that God allows difficult things in our lives so that we can help others going through difficult things.
 - *How does it change your perspective on suffering to see it as a gift for others?*
 - *How have you been comforted by other people during hard times in your life?*
 - *What are some trials God has allowed in your life that might be designed for you to help others when they go through something similar?*
 - *Who is someone you can encourage this week with the suffering you've been through?*

2. We are destined for testing...to grow our faith (vs. 2-5)

- Suffering shouldn't surprise us. Trials will always be part of the life of a Christ follower.
 - *How does the fact that we suffer make us more like Jesus?*
 - *Do you think it's possible to grow in our faith if we try to avoid trials and testing? Explain.*
- Pastor Jason said, "It is our reaction to trials that determines the results of the trials."
 - *As a group, brainstorm some people who are examples of men or women of great faith. What are some of the tests you know they have gone through?*
 - *How do you think people of great faith respond when going through suffering? What might change in your life if, the next time you are in a trial, you asked, "How can I respond to this trial like someone with great faith?"*

"Suffering is having what you don't want, or wanting what you don't have." - Elizabeth Elliot

PRAY TOGETHER (5-15 MINUTES)

- Pray that your group will see suffering as a gift given for the *good of others* and the *growth of the saints*.

